TOMB OF DRACULA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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THE TOMB OF DRACULA™

COMICDOM'S NUMBER 1 FEAR MAGAZINE

LORD OF VAMPIRES!

A NEW YEAR'S NIGHTMARE!

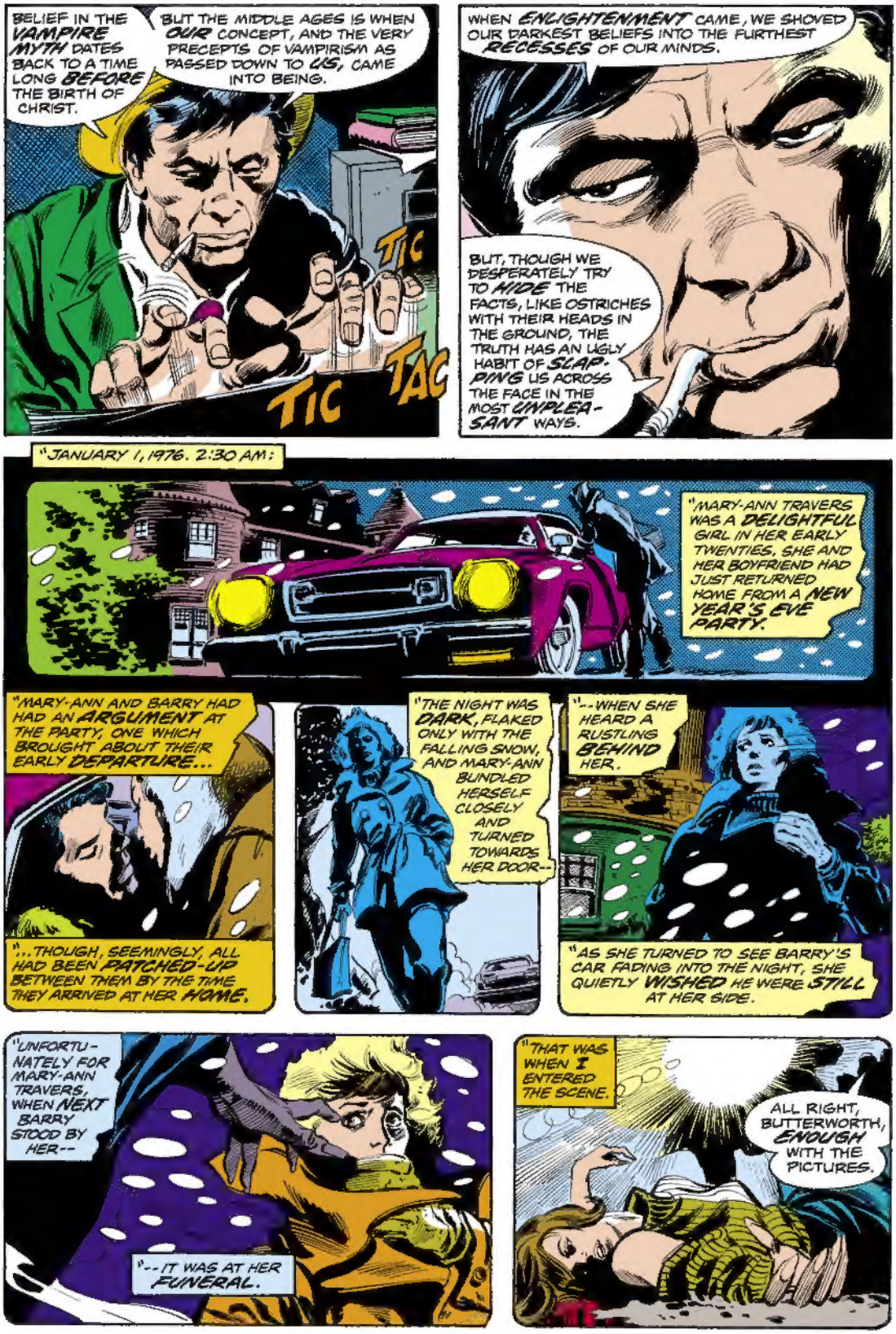
WRIGHTSON

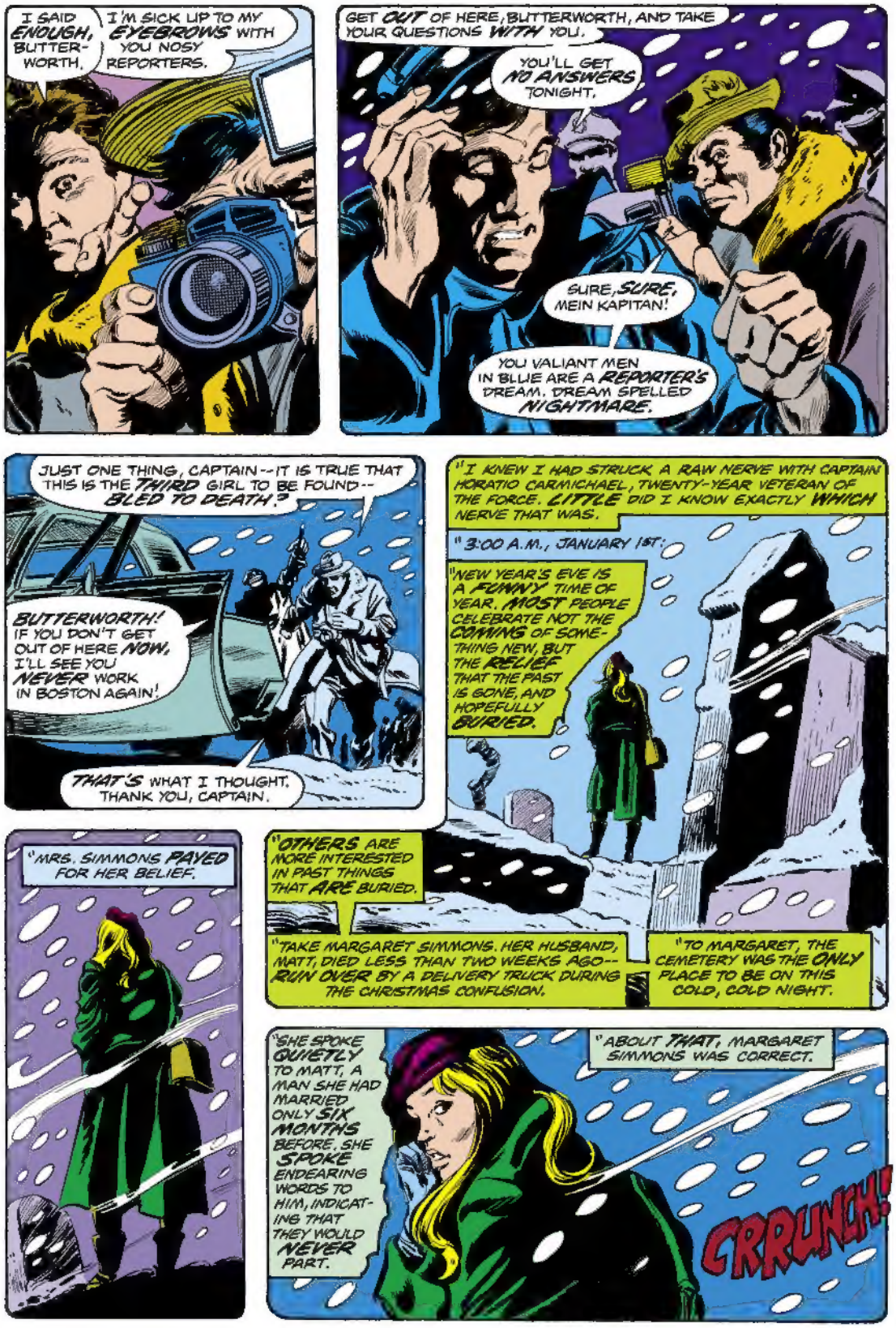
Stan Lee PRESENTS: TOMB OF DRACULA!

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT BY PAUL BUTTERWORTH AS TOLD TO :

MARV WOLFMAN WRITER / EDITOR / GENE COLAN & TOM PALMER ARTISTS / JOHN COSTANZA letterer / TOM PALMER colorist

I'M TYPING THIS AS QUICKLY AS I CAN, FOR I HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG IT WILL BE BEFORE HE FINDS ME.
AND, I AM SURE, HE WILL TRACE ME TO THIS NEWSROOM. FOR, DURING THESE PAST TWO NIGHTS, I HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT OF A THORN IN HIS HIDE.
JV208
THOUGH THIS STORY MAY NEVER BE PRINTED, THOUGH THE TIME I AM NOW TAKING MAY HAVE BEEN BETTER SPENT IN FLIGHT, THIS STORY MUST EVENTUALLY BE RELEASED.
FOR POSTERITY, AND I FEAR THAT'S ALL THIS TALE MAY BE GOOD FOR, I CALL MY STORY--
PAUL BUTTERWORTH--
THE NIGHT-STAKER!


BELIEF IN THE VAMPIRE MYTH DATES BACK TO A TIME LONG BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.
BUT THE MIDDLE AGES IS WHEN OUR CONCEPT, AND THE VERY PRECEPTS OF VAMPIRISM AS PASSED DOWN TO US, CAME INTO BEING.
TIC
TAC
TIC
WHEN ENLIGHTENMENT CAME, WE SHOVED OUR DARKEST BELIEFS INTO THE FURTHEST RECESSES OF OUR MINDS.
BUT, THOUGH WE DESPERATELY TRY TO HIDE THE FACTS, LIKE OSTRICHES WITH THEIR HEADS IN THE GROUND, THE TRUTH HAS AN UGLY HABIT OF SLAP-PING US ACROSS THE FACE IN THE MOST UNPLEA-SANT WAYS.
"JANUARY 1, 1976. 2:30 AM:
"MARY-ANN TRAVERS WAS A DELIGHTFUL GIRL IN HER EARLY TWENTIES, SHE AND HER BOYFRIEND HAD JUST RETURNED HOME FROM A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY.
"MARY-ANN AND BARRY HAD HAD AN ARGUMENT AT THE PARTY, ONE WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THEIR EARLY DEPARTURE...
"...THOUGH, SEEMINGLY, ALL HAD BEEN PATCHED-UP BETWEEN THEM BY THE TIME THEY ARRIVED AT HER HOME.
"THE NIGHT WAS DARK, FLAKED ONLY WITH THE FALLING SNOW, AND MARY-ANN BUNDLED HERSELF CLOSELY AND TURNED TOWARDS HER DOOR--
"--WHEN SHE HEARD A RUSTLING BEHIND HER.
"AS SHE TURNED TO SEE BARRY'S CAR FADING INTO THE NIGHT, SHE QUIETLY WISHED HE WERE STILL AT HER SIDE.
"UNFORTU-NATELY FOR MARY-ANN TRAVERS, WHEN NEXT BARRY STOOD BY HER--
"--IT WAS AT HER FUNERAL.
"THAT WAS WHEN I ENTERED THE SCENE.
ALL RIGHT, BUTTERWORTH, ENOUGH WITH THE PICTURES.


I SAID ENOUGH, BUTTER-WORTH.
I'M SICK UP TO MY EYEBROWS WITH YOU NOSY REPORTERS.
GET OUT OF HERE, BUTTERWORTH, AND TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS WITH YOU.
YOU'LL GET NO ANSWERS TONIGHT.
SURE, SURE, MEIN KAPITAN!
YOU VALIANT MEN IN BLUE ARE A REPORTER'S DREAM. DREAM SPELLED NIGHTMARE.
JUST ONE THING, CAPTAIN--IT IS TRUE THAT THIS IS THE THIRD GIRL TO BE FOUND--BLED TO DEATH?
BUTTERWORTH! IF YOU DON'T GET OUT OF HERE NOW, I'LL SEE YOU NEVER WORK IN BOSTON AGAIN!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
"I KNEW I HAD STRUCK A RAW NERVE WITH CAPTAIN HORATIO CARMICHAEL, TWENTY-YEAR VETERAN OF THE FORCE. LITTLE DID I KNOW EXACTLY WHICH NERVE THAT WAS.
"3:00 A.M., JANUARY 1ST:
"NEW YEAR'S EVE IS A FUNNY TIME OF YEAR. MOST PEOPLE CELEBRATE NOT THE COMING OF SOMETHING NEW, BUT THE RELIEF THAT THE PAST IS GONE, AND HOPEFULLY BURIED.
"MRS. SIMMONS PAYED FOR HER BELIEF.
"OTHERS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PAST THINGS THAT ARE BURIED.
"TAKE MARGARET SIMMONS. HER HUSBAND, MATT, DIED LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AGO--RUN OVER BY A DELIVERY TRUCK DURING THE CHRISTMAS CONFUSION.
"TO MARGARET, THE CEMETERY WAS THE ONLY PLACE TO BE ON THIS COLD, COLD NIGHT.
"SHE SPOKE QUIETLY TO MATT, A MAN SHE HAD MARRIED ONLY SIX MONTHS BEFORE. SHE SPOKE ENDEARING WORDS TO HIM, INDICATING THAT THEY WOULD NEVER PART.
"ABOUT THAT, MARGARET SIMMONS WAS CORRECT.
CRRUNCH!

"THE HOMICIDE REPORT INDICATED THAT FRESH EARTH HAD BEEN PUSHED ASIDE FROM THE GRAVE NEXT TO HER HUSBAND'S.
"THE LOGICAL ASSUMPTION FOR THE BOYS DOWNTOWN TO MAKE WAS THAT SHE HAD GONE MAD WITH GRIEF, AND HAD BEGUN CLAWING AT THE GROUND TO JOIN HER DEAR DEPARTED.
IEEEEE
"NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE POLICE NEVER QUITE GET ALL THE FACTS CORRECTLY IN THE REPORTING OF BIZARRE OCCURRENCES.

"ME, WELL, I'D SEEN STRANGER THINGS IN MY LIFE THAN BLOOD-DRAINED CORPSES LITTERING THE SNOW.

"YOU EVER HEAR OF MICHAEL MORBIUS? LET ME TELL YOU, HE'S A VAMPIRE--THAT'S RIGHT, A BLOOD-SUCKING, GIVE-ME-ETERNAL-LIFE UNDEAD. AND I MET HIM.

"IT WAS A YEAR AGO WHEN I FIRST SPOTTED HIM CROUCHED OVER A GIRL, RIPPING AT THE FLESH ON HER NECK. HE SAW ME AND FLED INTO THE NIGHT. THEN FOUR MONTHS AGO, I RAN ACROSS HIM AGAIN--AS HE WAS PREPARING TO TAKE LEAVE OF OUR FAIR CITY.

"PERHAPS HE'D RETURNED TO BOSTON, I THOUGHT AT FIRST.

"AS THE VARIOUS QUESTIONS DANCED INSIDE MY SKULL, I FLICKED ON THE CAR RADIO...

"...AND HEARD--

...AT YOUR NEWSSTANDS NOW, BE SURE TO PICK UP TRUE VAMPIRE STORIES, FEATURING REPORTER HAROLD HAROLD'S EYEWITNESS BATTLE WITH DRACULA.

ONLY $1.00 WHEREVER MAGAZINES ARE DISPLAYED. BUY IT TODAY!

HAROLD HAROLD? SEEMS TO ME I'VE MET HIM SOMEWHERE. OH YEAH--YEAH!

EIGHT MONTHS AGO, AT THE WITCHCRAFT CONVENTION.

WELL, MR. HAROLD HAROLD, YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF A LATE-NIGHT VISIT.

"I WRACKED MY MEMORY TRACING ANY THOUGHTS OF THIS HAROLD HAROLD. THEN I REMEMBERED--HE WAS A RATHER DUBIOUS BROTHER IN THE FOURTH ESTATE, A HACK WRITER OF PULP TALES, COMPLETE WITH GRISLY ACCOUNTS OF MURDER AND MAYHEM.

"I ALSO REMEMBERED THAT HE FOISTED HIS FIRST BOOK ON ME--"A COUNT OF DEATH." IN IT HE TRIED PROVING THAT THE WELL-KNOWN VAMPIRE, DRACULA, HAD BEEN REINCARNATED AS ADOLPH HITLER.

"EVEN THE DUST JACKET WAS DULL. BUT CLUES WERE NOW SCARCE, SO I CHECKED OUT HIS ADDRESS...

"...AND DROVE DOWNTOWN TO HIS FLAT.

HAROLD H. HARO

BZZZ

YEAH? WHO--OH, YOU--BUTTERWORTH.

I GOT YOUR CALL AND I WAITED UP.

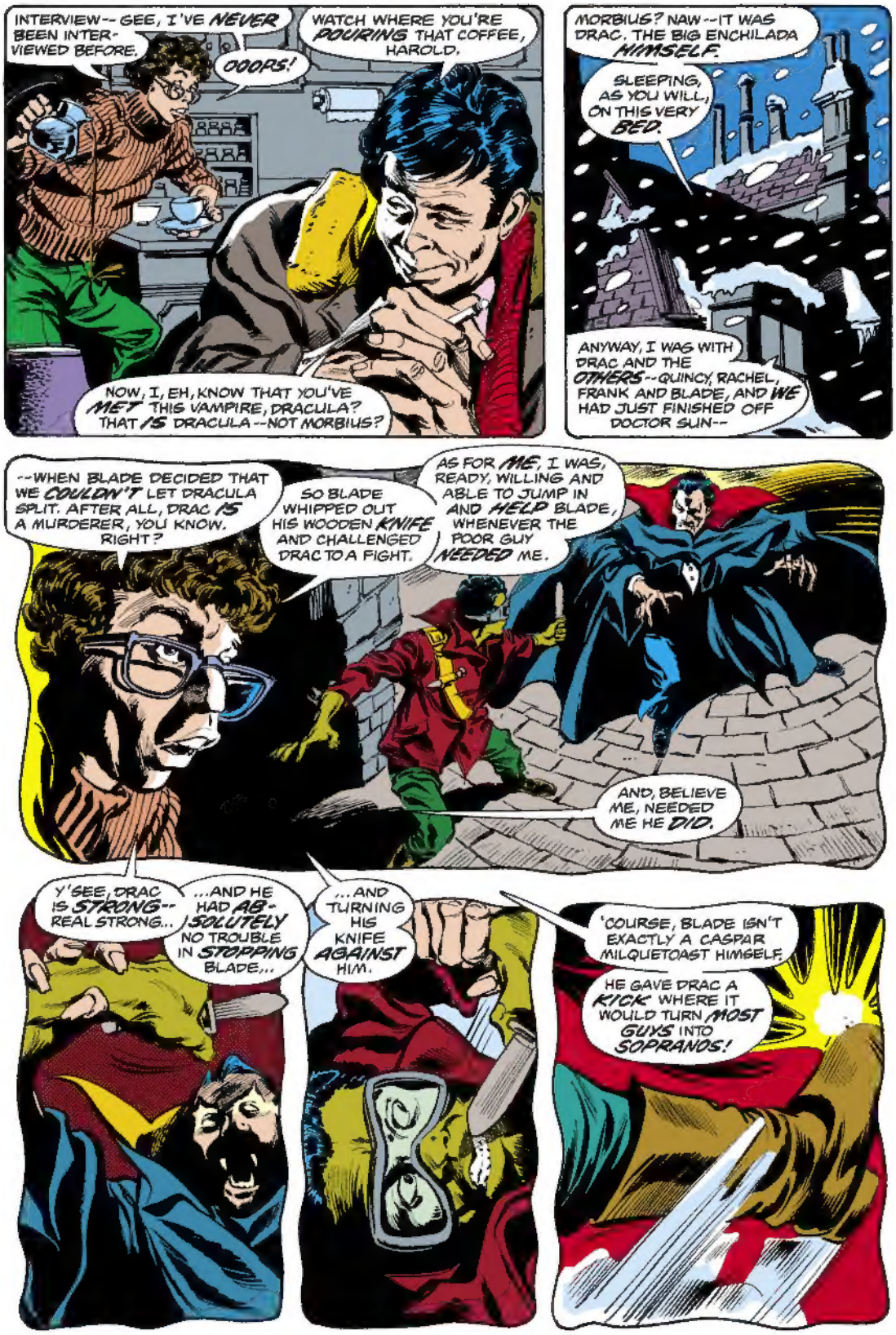
SAY, HAVE YOU READ MY BOOK, YET?

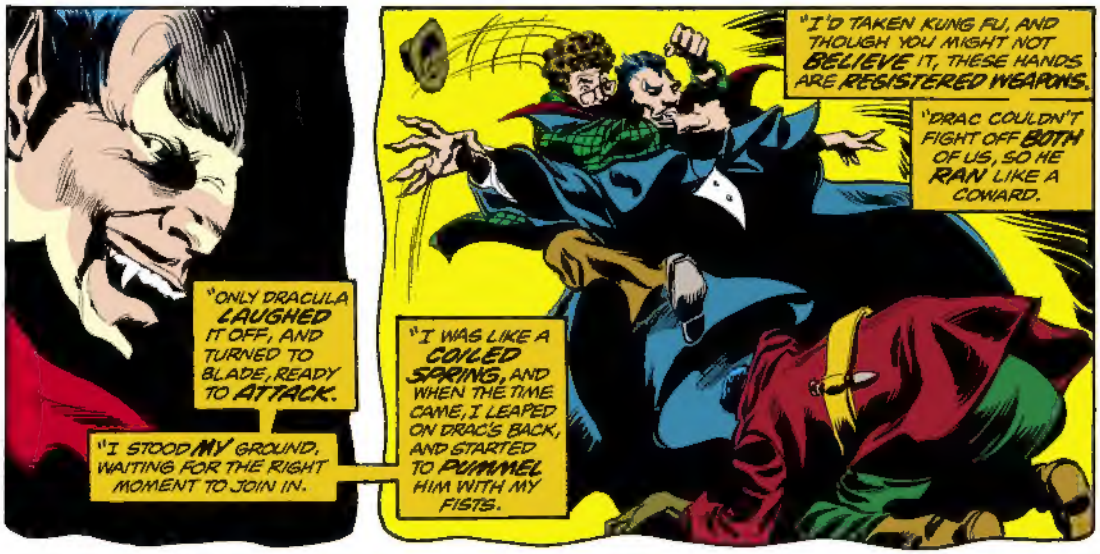
NO, HAROLD, TRUTH TO TELL, I'VE BEEN RATHER BUSY OF LATE--WORKING FOR THE BOSTON BUGLE, Y'KNOW.

WHICH IS WHY I'M, AHEM, HERE NOW--MY EDITOR, PAUL LAMENZO, WANTED ME TO INTERVIEW YOU FOR OUR, EH, SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT.

INTERVIEW ME? OH WOW!

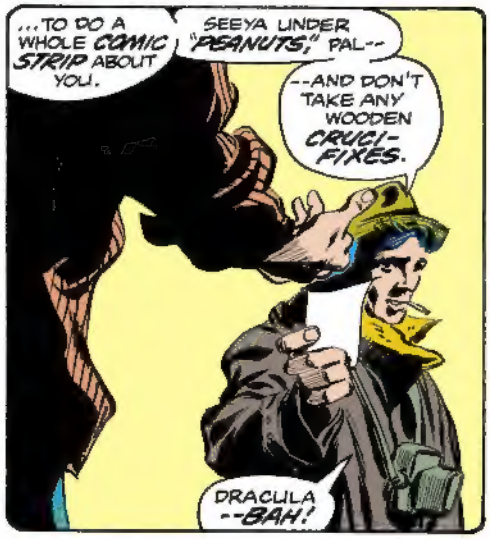
COME IN--COME IN. WANT SOME COFFEE, PAUL?

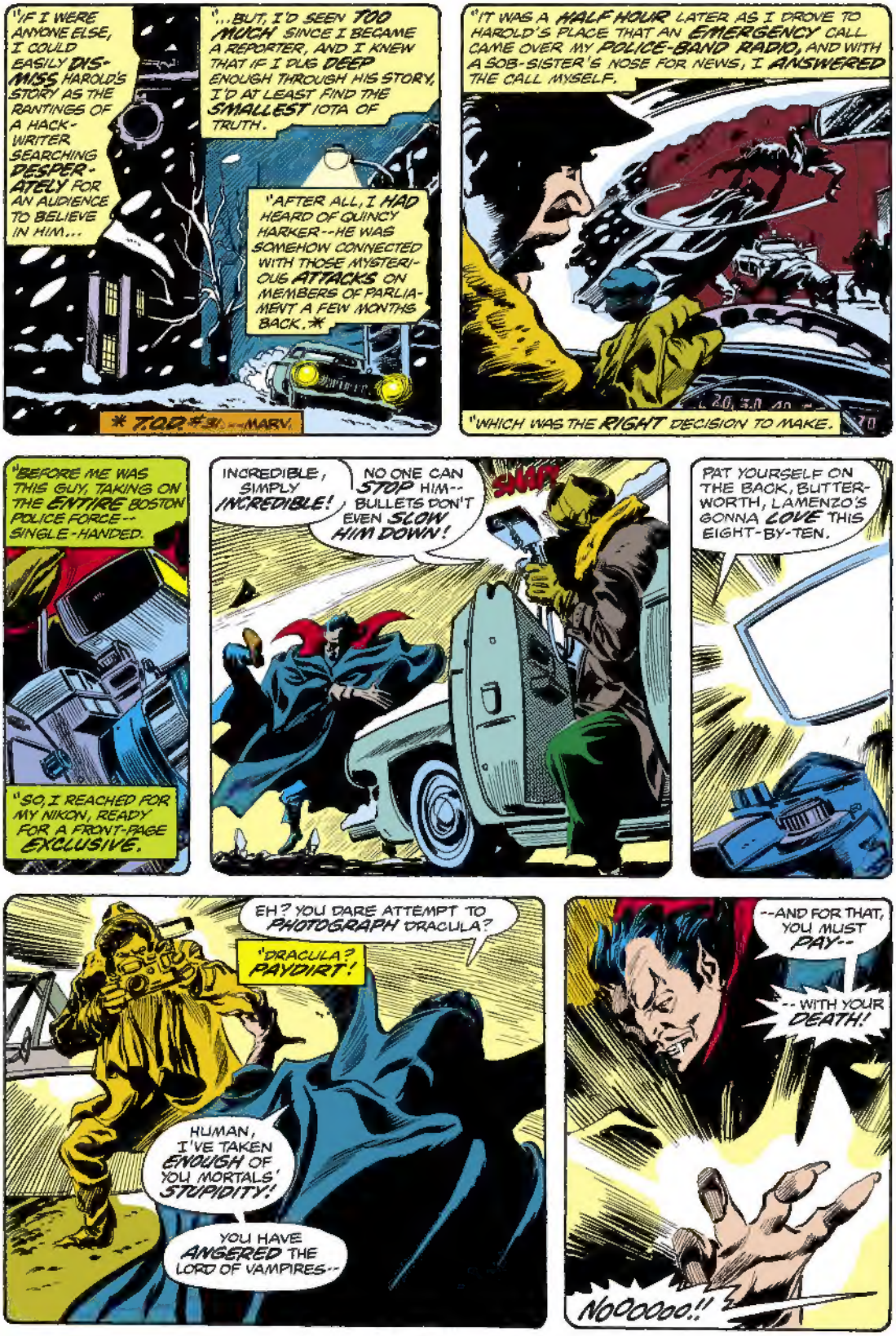

INTERVIEW-- GEE, I'VE NEVER BEEN INTER-VIEWED BEFORE.
OOOPS!
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE POURING THAT COFFEE, HAROLD.
NOW, I, EH, KNOW THAT YOU'VE MET THIS VAMPIRE, DRACULA? THAT IS DRACULA --NOT MORBIUS?
MORBIUS? NAW --IT WAS DRAC, THE BIG ENCHILADA HIMSELF.
SLEEPING, AS YOU WILL, ON THIS VERY BED.
ANYWAY, I WAS WITH DRAC AND THE OTHERS--QUINCY, RACHEL, FRANK AND BLADE, AND WE HAD JUST FINISHED OFF DOCTOR SUN--
--WHEN BLADE DECIDED THAT WE COULDN'T LET DRACULA SPLIT. AFTER ALL, DRAC IS A MURDERER, YOU KNOW. RIGHT?
SO BLADE WHIPPED OUT HIS WOODEN KNIFE AND CHALLENGED DRAC TO A FIGHT.
AS FOR ME, I WAS, READY, WILLING AND ABLE TO JUMP IN AND HELP BLADE, WHENEVER THE POOR GUY NEEDED ME.
AND, BELIEVE ME, NEEDED ME HE DID.
Y'SEE, DRAC IS STRONG-- REAL STRONG...
...AND HE HAD AB-SOLUTELY NO TROUBLE IN STOPPING BLADE...
...AND TURNING HIS KNIFE AGAINST HIM.
'COURSE, BLADE ISN'T EXACTLY A CASPAR MILQUETOAST HIMSELF.
HE GAVE DRAC A KICK WHERE IT WOULD TURN MOST GUYS INTO SOPRANOS!


"I'D TAKEN KUNG FU, AND THOUGH YOU MIGHT NOT BELIEVE IT, THESE HANDS ARE REGISTERED WEAPONS.
"DRAC COULDN'T FIGHT OFF BOTH OF US, SO HE RAN LIKE A COWARD.
"I WAS LIKE A COILED SPRING, AND WHEN THE TIME CAME, I LEAPED ON DRAC'S BACK, AND STARTED TO PUMMEL HIM WITH MY FISTS.
"ONLY DRACULA LAUGHED IT OFF, AND TURNED TO BLADE, READY TO ATTACK.
"I STOOD MY GROUND, WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO JOIN IN.

SO, I SAVED BLADE, AND GOT RID OF DRACULA AT THE SAME TIME. NOT BAD, EH?
YEAH, YEAH, NOT BAD, HAROLD. AND I THINK I'VE, EH, GOT JUST ENOUGH...
...MALARKY.
MIND GIVING ME THIS GUY BLADE'S ADDRESS? I'D LIKE TO TALK WITH HIM.

SURE, NO PROBLEM.
BUT I THOUGHT THIS WAS TO BE MY INTERVIEW. IT'S BEEN SO SHORT.
HAROLD--BELIEVE ME--I'VE INTERVIEWED YOU LONG ENOUGH...


...TO DO A WHOLE COMIC STRIP ABOUT YOU.
SEEYA UNDER "PEANUTS," PAL--
--AND DON'T TAKE ANY WOODEN CRUCI-FIXES.
DRACULA --BAH!


"IF I WERE ANYONE ELSE, I COULD EASILY DISMISS HAROLD'S STORY AS THE RANTINGS OF A HACK-WRITER SEARCHING DESPERATELY FOR AN AUDIENCE TO BELIEVE IN HIM...
"...BUT, I'D SEEN TOO MUCH SINCE I BECAME A REPORTER, AND I KNEW THAT IF I DUG DEEP ENOUGH THROUGH HIS STORY, I'D AT LEAST FIND THE SMALLEST IOTA OF TRUTH.
"AFTER ALL, I HAD HEARD OF QUINCY HARKER--HE WAS SOMEHOW CONNECTED WITH THOSE MYSTERIOUS ATTACKS ON MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT A FEW MONTHS BACK.*
* TOD #3 --MARV.
"IT WAS A HALF HOUR LATER AS I DROVE TO HAROLD'S PLACE THAT AN EMERGENCY CALL CAME OVER MY POLICE-BAND RADIO, AND WITH A SOB-SISTER'S NOSE FOR NEWS, I ANSWERED THE CALL MYSELF.
"WHICH WAS THE RIGHT DECISION TO MAKE.
"BEFORE ME WAS THIS GUY, TAKING ON THE ENTIRE BOSTON POLICE FORCE--SINGLE-HANDED.
"SO, I REACHED FOR MY NIKON, READY FOR A FRONT-PAGE EXCLUSIVE.
INCREDIBLE, SIMPLY INCREDIBLE!
NO ONE CAN STOP HIM--BULLETS DON'T EVEN SLOW HIM DOWN!
SNAP!
PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK, BUTTERWORTH, LAMENZO'S GONNA LOVE THIS EIGHT-BY-TEN.
EH? YOU DARE ATTEMPT TO PHOTOGRAPH DRACULA?
"DRACULA? PAYDIRT!
HUMAN, I'VE TAKEN ENOUGH OF YOU MORTALS' STUPIDITY!
YOU HAVE ANGERED THE LORD OF VAMPIRES--
--AND FOR THAT, YOU MUST PAY--
--WITH YOUR DEATH!
NOOOOOO!!

HEY! CAN'T WE TALK THIS OVER? I MEAN, LET'S HOLD RATIONAL DISCUSSION OR SOMETHING.
"I COULD SEE HE WAS NOT IN THE MOOD FOR A DEBATE, SO I HELD MY BREATH, THINKING THAT IT MIGHT BE MY LAST...
"...WHEN, SUDDENLY, I WAS SAVED--
"AS MY CRUCIFIX SLIPPED OUT FROM MY SHIRT.
WHAT?
THE DAMNED CRUCIFIX! NOT NOW! NOT NOW!!
"HE HISSED AT ME LIKE AN ANGRY ANIMAL, THEN BEFORE MY EYES HE REFORMED INTO A BAT--
"--AND VANISHED INTO THE MARITIME FOG.
"I WAS SHAKEN, AND A WEE-BIT DAMP IN THE PANTS, BUT I GATHERED MY ALL-TOO-MINISCULE COURAGE TOGETHER AND MADE MY WAY TO BLADE AND HARKER.
AND THAT'S IT FOR MY MEETING WITH DRAC. BUT, FRANKLY, I'M MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR STORY.
YEAH, I TANGLED WITH THE BIG-BAD DUDE...
...AN' I WAS JUST A HAIR'S BREATH AWAY FROM SLAYIN' 'IM.
ME AN' DRAC HAD JUST ABOUT WIPED SUN OUT WHEN I TURNED ON FANGS.
Y'SEE, I SWORE THAT I'D GET 'IM AFTER WE GOT SUN.
THAT MOTHER'S KILLED TOO MANY INNOCENTS TO LET WALK AROUND LIKE A FREE DUDE.
"WE DANCED AROUND SUN'S LAB FOR A COUNT OF TEN WITH FANGS ALWAYS LEAPIN' AWAY FROM MY THRUSTS.
"WE WERE FEELIN' EACH OTHER OUT-- SEEIN' THE BEST WAY TO MOVE.

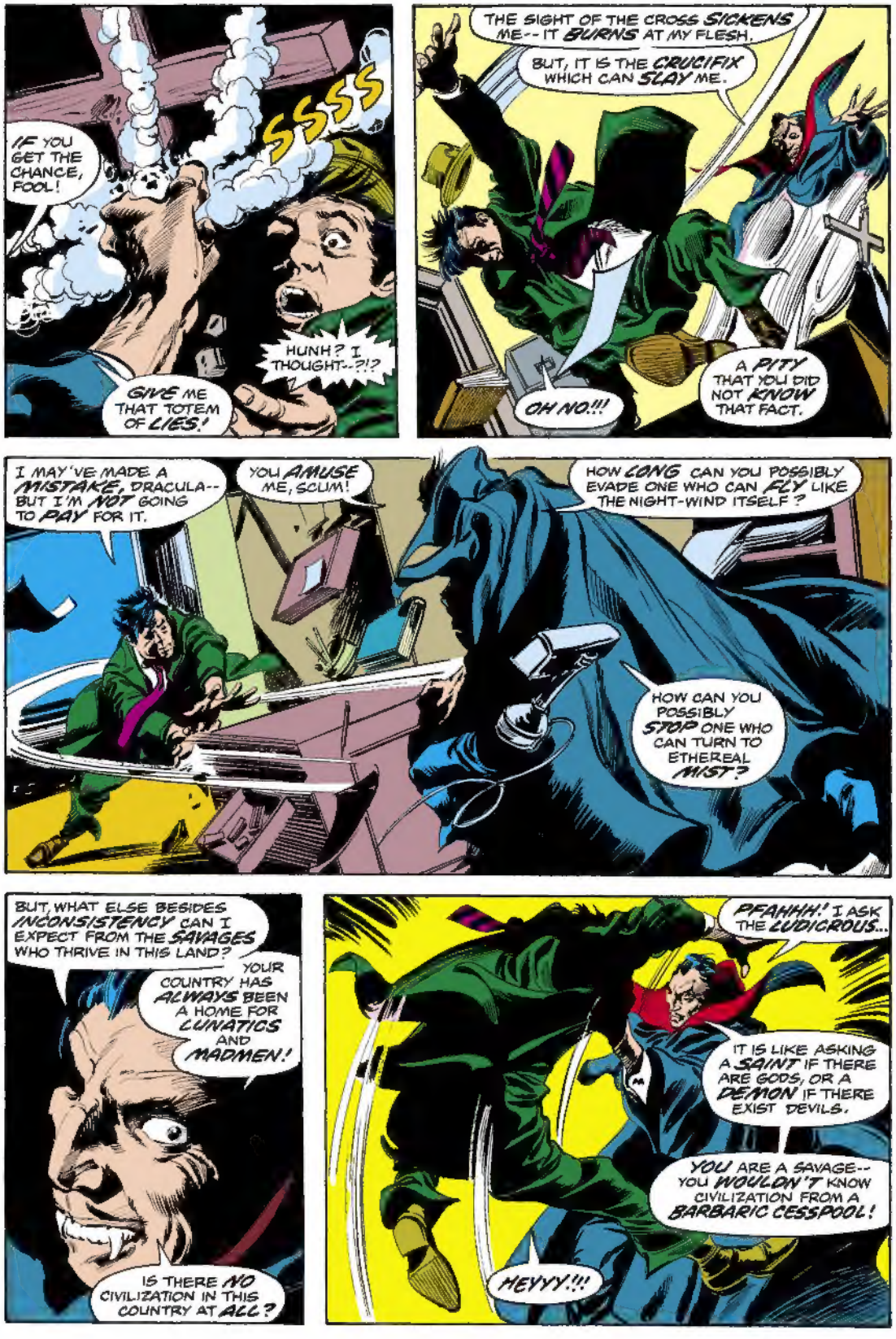
"NOW I GOT DRAC BACKED TO THE WALL, AND SOMEHOW HAROLD'S BEHIND 'IM, HUGGIN' THE WALL LIKE A SUNTAN.
"SO I MAKE MY MOVE, SLASHING DOWN WITH MY WOODEN KNIFE -- RIGHT AT DRAC'S CHEST--
"--ONLY FANGS TURNS FAST, AND I TRIP OVER HAROLD AND FANGS PICKS UP MY KNIFE -- TO TURN IT ON ME.
"I WAS SWEATIN' A-BOMBS WHEN SUDDENLY DRAC LURCHES FORWARD, AN' I SEE THAT RACHEL USED HER CROSSBOW ON 'IM--
'--CUTTIN' 'IM BETWEEN THE SHOULDERS.
THAT DUDE LOOKED MAD AS ALL HELL HE CURSED AT ME, AN' THEN CHANGED INTA A WOUNDED BAT AN' FLEW OFF
ALL IN A NIGHT'S WORK, EH?
NOW, HOW ABOUT TELLING ME...
"I WAS ASKING BLADE ABOUT HIS PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS WITH DRACULA, AND ALL THE WHILE, UNBEKNOWNST TO US, DOWNSTAIRS IN THE HOTEL'S LOBBY...
ATTENDANT' YOU HAVE A HARKER LISTED IN TH S HOTEL.
WHICH ROOM IS HE IN?
UH, SIR? IF YOU WANT HIM, I'D BE GLAD TO RING HIM UP.
I WANT HIS ROOM NUMBER, ATTENDANT
AND YOU SHALL GIVE IT TO ME -- NOW!
MR. BUTTERWORTH, HUNTING VAMPIRES IS NOT A GLAMOUROUS VOCATION, AND WE WISH NEITHER CREDIT NOR PUBLICITY.
IF YOU MUST USE THIS STORY, I DO WISH THAT YOU NOT PRINT OUR NAMES.
THERE ARE MANY CRANKS WHO WOULD,
I UNDERSTAND, MR. HARKER--BESIDES, NO ONE'S GOING TO BELIEVE WHAT I'VE GOT TO SAY, ANYWAY
IF YOU WANT TO BE MR ANONYMOUS CITIZEN, FINE WITH ME.

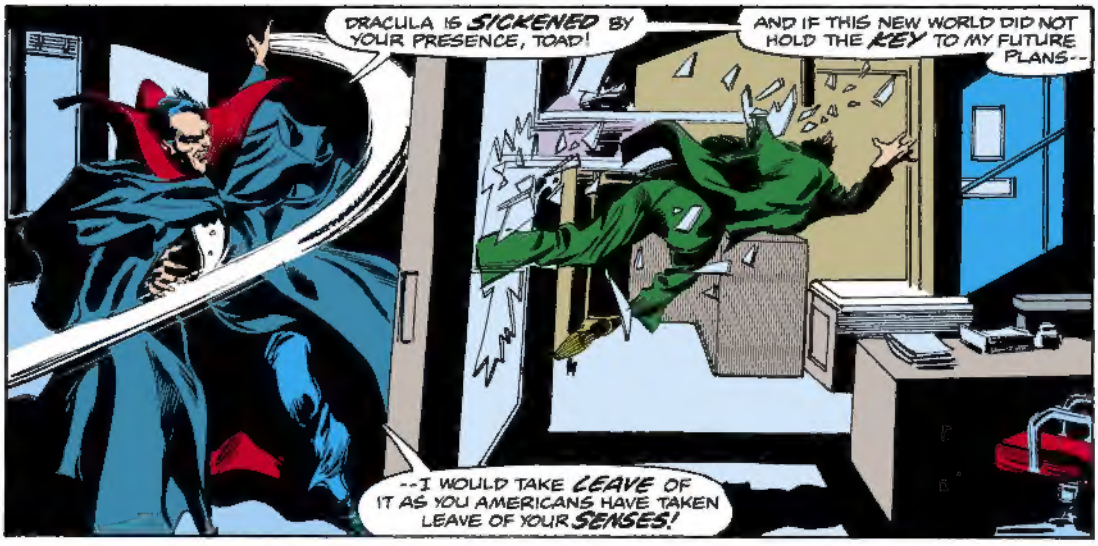
THANKS, MR BUTTERWORTH. WE'RE GONNA BE IN THE STATES FOR AWHILE...
AND I KNOW HOW MUCH A BOTHER SOME OF THE CRANKS CAN GET TO BE.
CAN WE HELP YOU IN ANY OTHER WAY?
NAH, THAT'LL BE ALL--FOR TONIGHT.
GOODBYE, MR BUTTERWORTH. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT.
KEEP A STIFF UPPER LIP, GROUP. AND TAKE CARE.
THERE SHALL BE NO GOOD NIGHTS TONIGHT, VAN HELSING!
TONIGHT IS A NIGHT FOR BLOOD!
AND THAT BLOOD SHALL BE YOURS!
DRACULA?!?

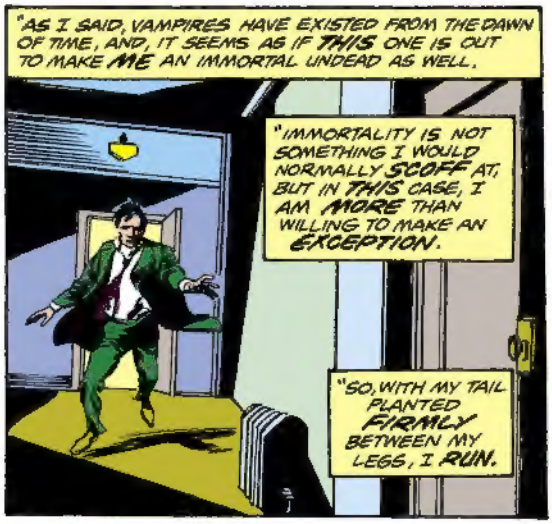
YOU THOUGHT I WOULD NOT ATTACK YOU HERE, HARKER?
FRANK! QUINCY!
KNOW THAT THERE IS NOWHERE THAT THE LORD OF VAMPIRES FEARS TO TREAD.
OUR COMRADESHIP IS OVER, AND NOW IS THE TIME FOR BLOODY BATTLE!
YOU CRY OUT FOR HELP, VAN HELSING? SO UNLIKE YOU.
YOU NORMALLY FIGHT WITH THE BEST OF MEN
SHE DOESN'T NEED HELP, FANGS, BUT SHE'S GETTIN' SOME, ANYWAY
BLADE? YOU STILL DARE TO ANNOY ME?
GIVE ME YOUR TOY, BLACK.
WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES--?!
AS FOR YOU, HARKER--
--NOW THAT FULL POWER IS MINE ONCE AGAIN...
I CAN TRULY MAKE YOU PAY FOR THAT NIGHT IN YOUR ANCESTRAL MANOR!
HEY, DRACULA? TAKE A PEEK OVER HERE!
I'VE GOT A PRESENT FOR YOU.
YOU AGAIN?
WITH THAT ACCURSED CRUCI-FIX!
BUT THIS TIME IT SHALL DO YOU NO GOOD, MORTAL SCUM!
GAZE DEEPLY INTO MY EYES.
UNNHHHH-HHHHHH
BECOME ONE WITH MY COMMANDS!
HEED MY WORDS, HUMAN!
DROP THE DAMNED OBJECT!
TOSS IT ASIDE LIKE THE GUTTER-TRASH IT IS!

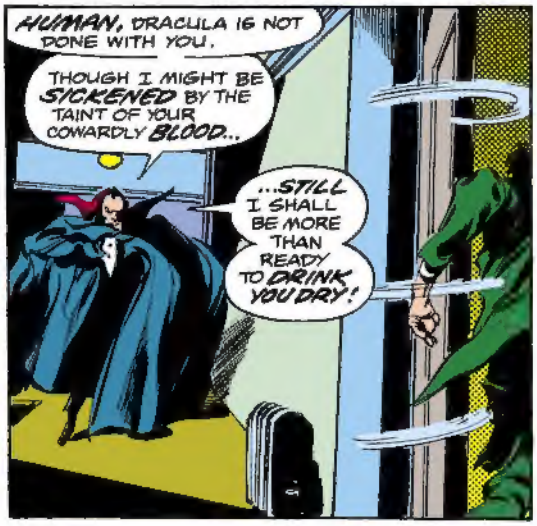
ALL RIGHT, ANCESTOR-MINE!
YOU'VE PLAYED AROUND WITH MY FRIENDS LONG ENOUGH.
NOW, TAKE ON ME!
FRANK DRAKE? SO, MY HAPLESS DESCENDANT AND I COME TO GRIPS AT LAST.
HEYYY!!
A SHAME YOU WILL NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REALIZE THE EXTENT OF YOUR FOOLISHNESS!
AND SO ENDS THE FAMILY-NAME OF DRACULA...
FOR YOU, FOOL, ARE THE LAST LIVING SOUL TO SHARE MY GLORIOUS TITLE!
BUT... CAN'T LET MYSELF BE DONE-IN NOW!
GOTTA SAVE MYSELF. GOTTA!
AND
AS FOR YOU, CLOD--
--I SHALL RETURN TO TAKE CARE OF YOU ANOTHER TIME...
"...WHILE YOU ARE NOW FREE TO LEAVE, AND TO LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF WHEN I DO RETURN."
NOW I SIT HERE TYPING THIS IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEONE WILL READ IT.
..FOR I MAY NEVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO TELL THIS STORY AGAIN.
SO, WITH THAT THREAT STILL RINGING IN MY EARS, DRAC LEFT THE SCENE AGAIN.
"WHEN DRACULA WILL COME, I DO NOT KNOW BUT I HAVE MADE PREPARATIONS
DELIVERY ENTRANCE
BOSTON BUGLE
"AND, AS SUCH... WAIT!
"A SOUND--OF WOOD BEING SPLINTERED!
D-DRACULA?
IS THAT YOU?
"THERE'S NO ANSWER, SO I GRAB MY GUN LOADED WITH SILVER BULLETS (YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO KNOW HOW MUCH THEY SET ME BACK). AND WAIT NERVOUSLY IN MY OFFICE

"FOOTSTEPS, COMING THIS WAY...
ALL RIGHT, MR. VAMPIRE-- I'M READY FOR YOU.
"OF COURSE, THAT WAS A LIE, BUT I NEEDED SOMETHING TO BOLSTER MY RAPIDLY FADING COURAGE.
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DRACULA-- C'MON IN--
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR DINNER--
--STARTING WITH...
...A SILVER-BULLET SANDWICH!
YOU THINK ME BLIND, HUMAN?
I WATCHED IN AMUSEMENT AS YOUR TREMBLING HAND PRESSED THE TRIGGER.
BAM
DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT I WOULD THEN LET MY FLESH AND BONE--
--BE A PHYSICAL TARGET FOR YOU TO VENT YOUR ALL-TOO-PUNY HUMAN EMOTIONS?
AND NOW, MY DOLTISH FRIEND...
AND NOW N-NOTHING, DRACULA--
--I'VE PREPARED FOR YOU THIS TIME.
ANOTHER CROSS? DOES THIS PERVERSE HANDLING OF RELIGIOUS GARBAGE NEVER CEASE?
TH-THIS ISN'T ONLY A CROSS, DRACULA--IT'S A STAKE AS WELL--
--TO POUND INTO YOUR HEART...
...TO DESTROY YOU FOREVER!


IF YOU GET THE CHANCE, FOOL!
SSSS
HUNH? I THOUGHT--?!?
GIVE ME THAT TOTEM OF LIES!
THE SIGHT OF THE CROSS SICKENS ME-- IT BURNS AT MY FLESH.
BUT, IT IS THE CRUCIFIX WHICH CAN SLAY ME.
OH NO!!!
A PITY THAT YOU DID NOT KNOW THAT FACT.
I MAY'VE MADE A MISTAKE, DRACULA-- BUT I'M NOT GOING TO PAY FOR IT.
YOU AMUSE ME, SCUM!
HOW LONG CAN YOU POSSIBLY EVADE ONE WHO CAN FLY LIKE THE NIGHT-WIND ITSELF?
HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY STOP ONE WHO CAN TURN TO ETHEREAL MIST?
BUT, WHAT ELSE BESIDES INCONSISTENCY CAN I EXPECT FROM THE SAVAGES WHO THRIVE IN THIS LAND?
YOUR COUNTRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A HOME FOR LUNATICS AND MADMEN!
IS THERE NO CIVILIZATION IN THIS COUNTRY AT ALL?
PFAHHH! I ASK THE LUDICROUS..
IT IS LIKE ASKING A SAINT IF THERE ARE GODS, OR A DEMON IF THERE EXIST DEVILS.
YOU ARE A SAVAGE-- YOU WOULDN'T KNOW CIVILIZATION FROM A BARBARIC CESSPOOL!
HEYYY!!!


DRACULA IS SICKENED BY YOUR PRESENCE, TOAD!
AND IF THIS NEW WORLD DID NOT HOLD THE KEY TO MY FUTURE PLANS--
--I WOULD TAKE LEAVE OF IT AS YOU AMERICANS HAVE TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES!

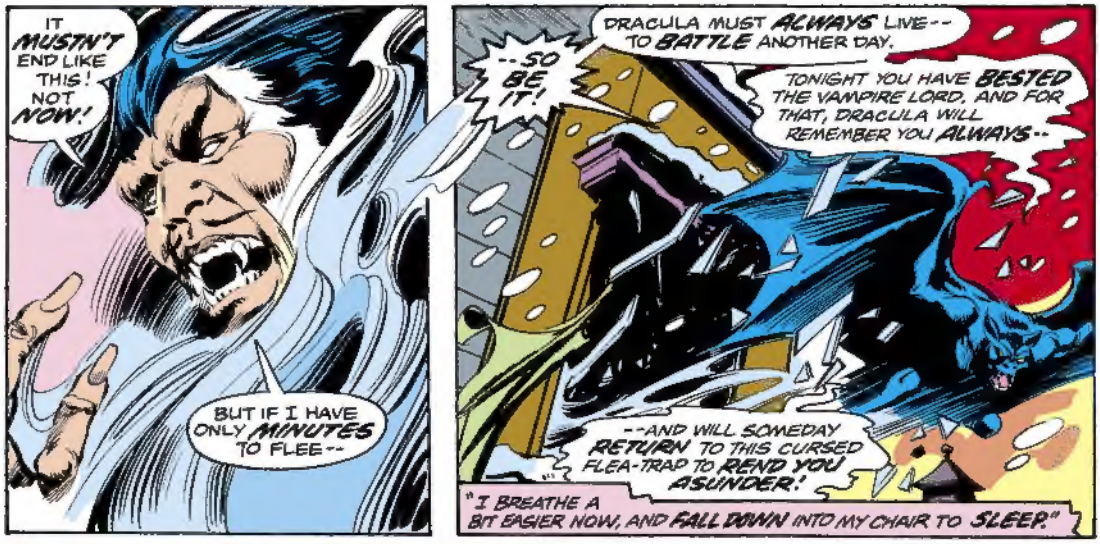

"AS I SAID, VAMPIRES HAVE EXISTED FROM THE DAWN OF TIME, AND, IT SEEMS AS IF THIS ONE IS OUT TO MAKE ME AN IMMORTAL UNDEAD AS WELL.
"IMMORTALITY IS NOT SOMETHING I WOULD NORMALLY SCOFF AT, BUT IN THIS CASE, I AM MORE THAN WILLING TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION.
"SO, WITH MY TAIL PLANTED FIRMLY BETWEEN MY LEGS, I RUN.

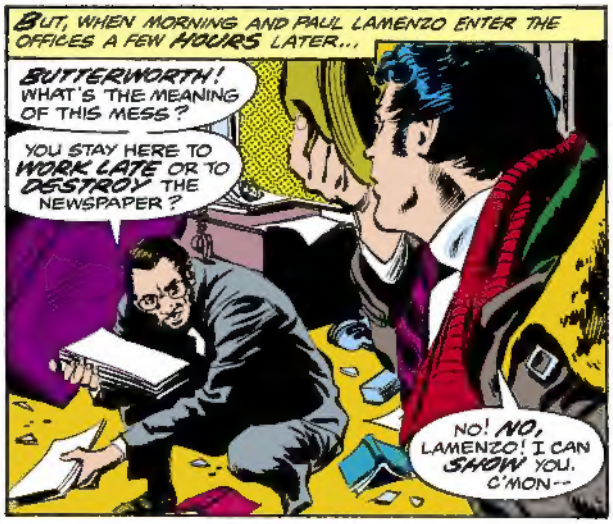

HUMAN, DRACULA IS NOT DONE WITH YOU.
THOUGH I MIGHT BE SICKENED BY THE TAINT OF YOUR COWARDLY BLOOD...
...STILL I SHALL BE MORE THAN READY TO DRINK YOU DRY!

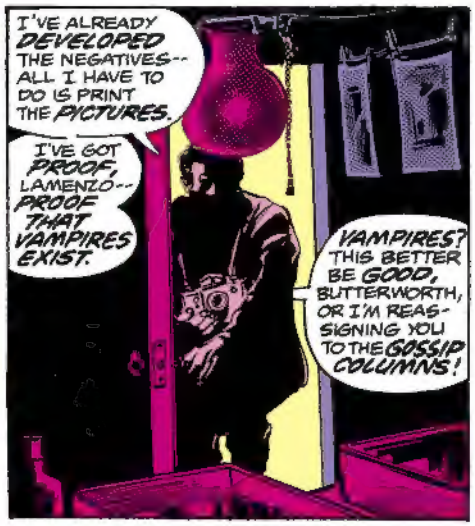
PREPARE YOUR LAST VOWS, HUMAN--
--FOR THEY SHALL BE THE LAST YOU MAKE TO YOUR PRESENT GOD.
WHEN NEXT YOU CAN UTTER WORDS OF SPEECH...
...THEY WILL BE IN REVERENCE TO DRACULA--LORD OF VAMPIRES!

HEY! NOT YET, DRACULA. I-I'M NOT READY TO DIE.
BUT I CAN OFFER YOU A STALEMATE!

LOOK OUTSIDE. WE'VE BEEN PLAYING GAMES TONIGHT, SO LONG, THAT IT'S ALMOST DAWN!
IN MINUTES THE SUN WILL BE OUT!
AGGGHHH!
NOOO!!


IT MUSTN'T END LIKE THIS! NOT NOW!
BUT IF I HAVE ONLY MINUTES TO FLEE--
DRACULA MUST ALWAYS LIVE-- TO BATTLE ANOTHER DAY.
--SO BE IT!
TONIGHT YOU HAVE BESTED THE VAMPIRE LORD, AND FOR THAT, DRACULA WILL REMEMBER YOU ALWAYS--
--AND WILL SOMEDAY RETURN TO THIS CURSED FLEA-TRAP TO REND YOU ASUNDER!
"I BREATHE A BIT EASIER NOW, AND FALL DOWN INTO MY CHAIR TO SLEEP."


BUT, WHEN MORNING AND PAUL LAMENZO ENTER THE OFFICES A FEW HOURS LATER...
BUTTERWORTH! WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS MESS?
YOU STAY HERE TO WORK LATE OR TO DESTROY THE NEWSPAPER?
NO! NO, LAMENZO! I CAN SHOW YOU. C'MON--


I'VE ALREADY DEVELOPED THE NEGATIVES-- ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PRINT THE PICTURES.
I'VE GOT PROOF, LAMENZO-- PROOF THAT VAMPIRES EXIST.
VAMPIRES? THIS BETTER BE GOOD, BUTTERWORTH, OR I'M REASSIGNING YOU TO THE GOSSIP COLUMNS!

C'MON-- C'MON, LAMENZO. I'M YOUR STAR REPORTER!
WHEN I SAY I'VE GOT A STORY FOR YOU, I'VE GOT A DOOZY!
HERE, LOOK AT THIS PHOTO--

PHOTO? BUTTERWORTH, THERE'S NOTHING ON THIS PAPER BUT COPS...FALLING DOWN.
WHERE'S YOUR VAMPIRE PLAYMATES, MISTER BUTTERWORTH?

I FORGOT--
VAMPIRES DON'T PHOTOGRAPH!
BUTTERWORTH, I DO HOPE YOU ENJOY READING MAIL-- BECAUSE THE "ASK MISS ANNIE" COLUMN GETS A HELLUVA LOT!
NEXT
THE STORY THAT HAD TO HAPPEN!
DR. STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!